

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
MIAMI DIVISION**

Case No. 1:25-cv-20557-RAR

**“CHELSEA,” “MARIA,” “VIOLET,”
“JENNY,” and “SLOANE,”**

Plaintiffs,

v.

STEFAN CIOBANU,

Defendant.

**DECLARATION OF SUSANNA L. SOUTHWORTH IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION FOR DEFAULT JUDGMENT AND
ATTORNEY’S FEES AND COSTS PURSUANT TO FED. R. CIV. P. 55(b)(2)**

I, SUSANNA L. SOUTHWORTH declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. I am one of the attorneys for the Plaintiffs. I make this declaration based on my own knowledge and professional experience in support of the Plaintiffs’ Motion for Default Judgment and Attorney Fees and Costs Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(b)(2).

My Qualifications

2. I am a co-owner and partner at Restore the Child, PLLC, a law firm that represents survivors of sexual assault, child pornography, and child sexual abuse material (“CSAM”), child exploitation, and child trafficking.

3. I have been employed with Restore the Child, PLLC since 2022. I am licensed to practice law in the state of Washington, and I am in good standing with the state bar.

4. Since 2022, I began working on child pornography cases by representing survivors of child sex abuse, including child pornography production, trade, and possession. Litigating 18 U.S.C. § 2255 cases has been a routine part of my practice.

Plaintiff Law Firms Coordinated Efforts to Ensure Efficiencies

5. Four different law firms have worked on this litigation. Together, they represent the five (5) Plaintiffs.

6. Because all Plaintiffs shared a common perpetrator, they filed this action jointly and coordinated the representation to streamline the litigation and obtain efficiencies for all involved— Plaintiffs, Defendant, and the Court.

7. Consequently, this fee application seeks fees for time charged and expenses incurred by all four law firms. Plaintiffs request that the award of fees and costs be divided among the five (5) Plaintiffs equally.

Underlying Criminal Case and Status of Defendant

8. On or about May 23, 2022, the United States Department of Justice Victim Notification System sent a notification to the Marsh Law Firm PLLC., Carol L. Hepburn, P.S., and Restore the Child, PLLC that Defendant was found in possession of their respective clients' pornographic images.

9. Defendant was then prosecuted by the Southern District of Florida United States Attorney for possession of child pornography. Defendant pled guilty.

10. To the best of my knowledge and belief, Defendant is not a person currently in military service, and the Defendant is not a minor or incompetent.

Progress of the Litigation and Tasks Performed

11. The law firms involved in this action performed the following tasks:
 - a. The Firms reviewed the criminal docket and conducted research on Defendant.
 - b. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §3509(m)(3), the attorneys requested the Government to review the evidence concerning the Plaintiffs' images possessed by Defendant. The purpose of the reviews was to confirm that the images are of Plaintiffs and qualify as child pornography under applicable law. Evidence reviews took place on February 17, 2023, August 6, 2024, and August 15, 2024.
 - c. Upon the plea of Defendant in the criminal case and the order of restitution to the above-named Plaintiffs, and upon further confirmation from one evidence review that the images were of the Plaintiffs and depicted child sexual abuse, the firms together drafted the summons and complaint, filed on February 6, 2025, as well as a motion to proceed under pseudonyms and three supporting declarations, filed on February 20, 2025. (ECF No. 9). The pseudonym motion required research into the law of the Eleventh Circuit and this Court. On February 20, 2025, the Court granted the pseudonym motion. (ECF No. 10).
 - d. After Defendant failed to timely respond to the summons and complaint, after being properly served on March 14, 2025 (ECF No. 13), as well as Plaintiffs pseudonym motion being granted on February 20, 2025 (ECF No. 10), the firms prepared and filed papers seeking the entry of default. (ECF No. 15).
 - e. On April 8, 2025, the clerk entered a certificate of default. (ECF No. 16).
 - f. The firms then drafted papers in support of the instant motion for default judgment at a sum certain of \$750,000 plus attorneys' fees and costs.

Total Hours for Which Compensation is Sought

12. The hours for which a fee award is sought total 61.5 hours, with hours charged by each timekeeper and the tasks performed shown in the chart below. I have reviewed those hours and have, in good faith, excluded any that I believe were excessive, redundant, or otherwise unnecessary.

Attorney/Paralegal	Hours	Rate/Hr	Tasks Performed	Total
Margaret E. Mabie	4.5	\$600	Initial pleading review; internal team meetings; telephone calls with team members and local counsel; emails and other communications with team members and co-counsel; calls and communications with MLF clients; drafting of pseudonym motion; drafting and review of initial disclosures; legal research; asset inquiry; case investigation; evidentiary analysis.	\$2700.00
Ptahra Jeppe	1	\$400	Internal team meetings; telephone calls with team members and local counsel; emails and other communications with team members and co-counsel; calls and communications with MLF clients; drafting of pseudonym motion; drafting of initial disclosures; legal research.	\$400.00
Sarah Soogrim-Dass	1	\$150	Internal team meetings; telephone calls with team members and local counsel.	\$150.00
Hassina Adams	1	\$150	Internal team meetings; telephone calls with team members and local counsel; emails and other communications with team members and co-counsel; calls	\$150.00

			and communications with MLF clients.	
Carol L. Hepburn	3	\$500	Review criminal pleadings to assess civil case; travel and conduct second evidence review for additional plaintiff; revise draft civil pleadings.	\$1500.00
Susanna Southworth	24.8	\$500	Case investigation and strategy; conduct evidence review; revise and finalize pleadings and other documents for filing; internal team meetings; meetings with local counsel; telephone calls with team members and local counsel; emails with team members and co-counsel, and with RTC client; document drafting and editing; legal research; draft and finalize motion for default judgment and declaration in support and exhibits; filing same. ¹	\$12,400.00
Faith Potter	.4	\$200	Legal research for motion to proceed under pseudonyms.	\$80.00
Tatum Anheluk	15.3	\$150	Drafting pleadings and correspondence; organizing file; calendaring; internal team meetings and emails re: case; correspondence.	\$2295.00
Kathryn L. Avila	8.5	\$500	Revising, editing, and formatting all filings and pleadings to conform with the Southern District of Florida's local rules; meetings with co-counsel; legal research; drafting, revising and editing motions and briefing.	\$4250.00
Ashley Windsor	2	\$150	Revising, editing, and formatting initial pleadings to conform with the Southern District of Florida's local rules; finalizing pleadings,	\$300.00

¹ Detailed reports are available documenting the work performed by each Attorney and Paralegal that can be provided upon the court's request.

			motions, and proposed orders; service of process.	
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13. I believe that the hours for which a fee award is being sought are reasonable, given the tasks performed and the number of clients represented.

Normal Hourly Rates

14. Below, I list the attorneys and paraprofessionals for whom a fee award is sought, along with a brief description of their experience and their normal hourly rates in the communities in which they practice for work on child pornography and child sex abuse cases.

15. I, Susanna L. Southworth, I am a partner with Restore the Child, PLC. My qualifications are listed above.

16. Kathryn L. Avila is an associate attorney with Nigh Goldenberg Raso & Vaughn, PLLC. Ms. Avila has practiced law since 2019 and is licensed in the states of Florida, Oregon, and Colorado, where she is in good standing. Her practice is based in Pensacola, Florida. Ms. Avila has litigated civil lawsuits on behalf of survivors of sex trafficking under the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act in several federal district courts all over the country. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases in Pensacola, Florida is \$500.

17. Margaret E. Mabie is a partner with the Marsh Law Firm and began working with many of the Plaintiffs in this case in 2019. Ms. Mabie has practiced law since 2020 and is licensed in the state of New York, where she is in good standing. Her practice is based in New York, New York, and has focused on representing survivors of child sex abuse, including child pornography survivors who seek compensation and other relief in federal criminal and civil proceedings. Ms. Mabie has lobbied on behalf of the Plaintiffs and other clients to amend the statute of limitations on 18 U.S.C. § 2255 in 2022. She has represented each of the Plaintiffs in

this action in numerous prior matters. Ms. Mabie also represents several of the Plaintiffs in criminal restitution matters and specialized civil proceedings on a regular basis. She was invited and attended the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Expert Group Meeting on CSAM removal in 2023. Ms. Mabie's practice encompasses a wide range of matters representing survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Ms. Mabie has also appeared on behalf of Plaintiffs and those similarly situated in numerous courts around the country, including but not limited to, New York, Florida, Michigan, and California. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases in New York City is \$600.

18. Ptahra Jeppe is an associate with the Marsh Law Firm and began working with many of the Plaintiffs in this case in 2024. Ms. Jeppe has practiced law since 2020 and is licensed in the state of New York, where she is in good standing. Her practice is based in New York, New York and has focused on representing children and marginalized groups, including child pornography survivors who seek compensation and other relief in administrative and civil proceedings. Ms. Jeppe's hourly fee for these types of cases in New York City is \$400.

19. Carol L. Hepburn is the founder of Carol L. Hepburn, P.S. Attorneys at Law. Ms. Hepburn has been licensed to practice law in the State of Washington since 1978 and in the State of Oregon since 2003. She is, and has been, in good standing in both states throughout that time. Ms. Hepburn began her practice in 1978 as a deputy prosecuting attorney for King County in Seattle, Washington. At that time, among other matters, she prosecuted sexual assault crimes. Since leaving the prosecutor's office in 1982, her practice has included criminal defense of sexual assault crimes, family law cases involving alleged child sex abuse, serious personal injury and medical negligence matters including brain injury and birth injury, civil sexual harassment matters both for plaintiffs and defendants, investigating sexual harassment allegations for

employers, and civil sexual assault tort cases, as well as child sex abuse image crime related litigation on behalf of survivors of those crimes. Since 2008, Ms. Hepburn has represented survivors of child sex assault image exploitation crimes in both criminal restitution and civil matters. Ms. Hepburn's normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$500.

20. Sarah Soogrim-Dass was a paralegal with The Marsh Law Firm PLLC with over 20 years of experience in the legal profession. She worked for The Marsh Law Firm assisting attorneys in child sex abuse cases, including § 2255 child pornography cases. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$150.

21. Hassina Adams is a paralegal with Marsh Law Firm PLLC. She works for The Marsh Law Firm assisting attorneys in child sex abuse cases, including § 2255 child pornography cases. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$150.

22. Faith Potter is a paralegal with Restore the Child, PLLC, and she has about 18 years of litigation experience. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$200.

23. Tatum Anheluk is a paralegal with Restore the Child, PLLC, and she has about 5 years of litigation experience. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$150.

24. Ashley Windsor is a paralegal with Nigh Goldenberg Raso & Vaughn, PLLC, and has about 7 years of litigation experience. Her normal hourly fee for these types of cases is \$150.

25. Along with the other attorneys working on this case, I, as an attorney of the Restore the Child, PLLC, am one of the very few attorneys in the nation regularly representing survivors of CSAM crimes in civil matters brought under 18 U.S.C. § 2255. The issues presented in this instant case are fairly unique in that few civil cases brought by victims of the crimes of child sex abuse material exploitation have been brought across the nation.

26. In addition to representing these victims in civil matters related to their widely distributed and shared child sex abuse material, the lawyers are also heavily involved in obtaining restitution for the victims in a defendant's criminal proceedings. Attached as Exhibit 1 is a true and correct copy of the Judgment in Defendant Stefan Ciobanu's criminal case, Case No. 1:22-CR-20480-WPD(1).

27. The normal hourly rates listed above take into consideration the lawyers' and paraprofessionals' expertise and special skill in representing victims of child pornography and the fact that the lawyers are part of a select few in the country who work on and specialize in these types of cases. Even where the hourly rates in a District were arguably less than the attorney's hourly rates established herein, the Courts have ordered the attorneys' fees requested without modification to the hourly rates. See e.g., *Doe et al v. Jasperse*, Case No. 1:22-cv-21466-JLK (the Court found the normal hourly rates ranging from \$450 to \$750 for attorneys Mabie and Hepburn to be reasonable and awarded Plaintiffs' attorneys' fees in the amount requested, amounting to \$53,744.00). A true and correct copy of the Order granting Plaintiffs' Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Costs in *Doe et al v. Jasperse*, Case No. 1:22-cv-21466-JLK, is attached hereto as Exhibit 2.

Lodestar

28. The value of this time expended without any lodestar enhancement is \$24,225.00. No upward adjustment from this lodestar is requested.

Costs

29. Costs expended on this litigation total \$1559.09, and are as follows:

- a. Marsh Law Firm PLLC: \$507.09 (Evidence Review Costs).
- b. Nigh Goldenberg Raso & Vaughn, PLLC: \$1005.00.
 - i. \$405 – Filing Fee

- ii. \$250 – Pro Hac Vice Fee
- iii. \$350 – Service of Process Fee
- c. Carol L. Hepburn, P.S.: \$25.00.
 - i. Pacer Fees: \$15.00;
 - ii. Evidence Review Costs: \$10.00.
- d. Restore the Child, PLLC: \$22.00.
 - i. Evidence Review Costs: \$10.00;
 - ii. Pacer Fees: \$12.00.

CONCLUSION

30. I respectfully ask the Court to issue a default judgment for the sum certain of \$750,000.00 plus the requested attorneys’ fees and costs.

DATED this 18th day of April, 2025, at Tacoma, Washington.

s/ Susanna L. Southworth
Susanna L. Southworth, PhD, JD (*Pro Hac Vice*)
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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 18th day of April, 2025, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court by using the CM/ECF system which will send a notice of this electronic filing to all parties and/or counsel of record in this action.

/s/ Susanna L. Southworth
Susanna L. Southworth